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Tenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 22 of its resolution 1289 (2000) of 7 February 2000, the Security Council requested me to report to it on a regular basis on security conditions on the ground in Sierra Leone so that troop levels and the tasks to be performed by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) could be kept under review. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and covers developments since my ninth report on UNAMSIL, dated 14 March 2001 (S/2001/228).

II. Political situation

Implementation of the Abuja agreement

2. During the reporting period, the two-track approach pursued by the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community has begun to bear fruit, and significant progress has been achieved in the Sierra Leone peace process. On 10 April 2001 the joint committee comprising the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations met in Abuja and decided to meet with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to review the implementation of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement of 10 November 2000 (S/2000/1091, annex). That review meeting took place in Abuja on 2 May 2001. The Government of Nigeria provided an aircraft to transport the RUF delegation. At the meeting, it was concluded that the ceasefire agreement had been largely observed, with the exception of some attacks by the Civil Defence Force (CDF) on RUF in the eastern part of the country. The Government of Sierra Leone was urged to exert the necessary control over CDF in order to avert future attacks that could jeopardize the peace process. The Government of Sierra Leone was also called upon to take steps to extend its authority throughout the country as UNAMSIL deployed. The meeting also resulted in a renewed commitment by the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF to remove all roadblocks in areas under their control. RUF also pledged to return, by 30 May 2001, all weapons and equipment it had seized from UNAMSIL and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

3. The meeting also led to an affirmation that CDF and RUF should disarm simultaneously. To that end, a joint committee on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration comprising UNAMSIL, the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF would meet in Freetown on 15 May to develop a timetable and modalities for the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The meeting further called upon the fighting groups to release all abductees, in particular child combatants, and urged the two parties to create an atmosphere conducive to the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

4. In addressing some of the regional ramifications of the Sierra Leone conflict, the meeting agreed that RUF should withdraw all of its combatants from the Kambia district and that, subsequently, the Sierra Leone army would deploy there. The withdrawn RUF combatants would be disarmed and demobilized. For its part, the Government of Sierra Leone indicated that its army and police would be open to the recruitment of demobilized ex-combatants after careful screening.

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5. The Government of Sierra Leone also declared its preparedness to address some of the Front's political concerns, including releasing some detained RUF leaders, facilitating the transformation of RUF into a political party, and providing land or office space to the party in Freetown and in the provinces to enable it to meet the criteria for becoming a political party.

6. The results of the meeting in Abuja were endorsed by the RUF military leadership on 6 May. RUF also announced that it would no longer insist that the Sierra Leone army be included in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. For its part, the Government set up a high-ranking task force to oversee the implementation of the Abuja decisions.

Meetings of the joint committee

7. The above-mentioned joint committee met on 15 May at UNAMSIL headquarters in Freetown. It was the first high-level meeting between the Government, including CDF representatives, and RUF in Sierra Leone since the eruption of the crisis in May 2000. A second meeting of the joint committee was convened in Magburaka on 2 June, which was the first visit by government and CDF representatives to an area where RUF has a strong presence.

8. At the first meeting, the CDF and RUF leaders issued a joint communiqué in which they solemnly undertook to instruct their combatants to cease hostilities throughout the country forthwith. The parties agreed that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should commence on 18 May with the simultaneous disarmament of RUF and CDF in the Kambia and Port Loko districts, and that the exercise should be completed on 28 May. Immediately thereafter, the Sierra Leone army would be deployed in the Kambia district to ensure the security of the border with Guinea.

9. At the second meeting of the committee, it was decided that the next stage of the disarmament process would be carried out simultaneously in the Kono and Bonthe districts during the month of June. Remaining CDF and RUF elements in the Port Loko district would be disarmed in Lunsar. The joint committee would meet again on 30 June to decide on a timetable for disarmament in all the remaining districts. The two parties agreed to form joint sensitization teams to promote a country-wide reconciliation process. RUF stated that it would begin to release child combatants and abductees on 25 May and to return weapons and equipment it had seized from ECOMOG and UNAMSIL on 30 May.

10. At the meetings of the joint committee, the RUF delegation reiterated its request to the Government to facilitate the registration of its political party and expressed the view that an interim government should be formed after the Government's mandate expired in September. RUF also expressed concern about reports that some of its detained members had died in custody. Initially, the Government representatives denied that there had been deaths of RUF members in custody. However, at the second meeting of the joint committee, the Government confirmed that 10 detainees, including 8 members of RUF, had died in prison during the period from May 2000 to May 2001. In view of the recent progress made in the peace process, the Government has set up a high-level committee to consider the release of some RUF detainees who would be required to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

11. Nearly all of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 2 May in Abuja and at the follow-up meeting on 15 May in Freetown have been implemented. The disarmament of RUF and CDF in the Kambia and Port Loko districts and the withdrawal of RUF from Kambia were completed on schedule. The Sierra Leone army started deploying to the Kambia district on 29 May and completed the deployment on 31 May. RUF released a total of 591 child combatants on 25 May and a further 178 on 4 June. The process of releasing more children is ongoing. The clashes between CDF and RUF in the Kono district were halted following intensive discussions between UNAMSIL leadership and the local commanders of the two groups, who agreed to begin immediate disarmament in the district.

12. However, on 30 May RUF handed over to UNAMSIL in Makeni only a negligible amount of assorted items, which included 10 weapons, some uniforms, beds, identity cards and 2 completely vandalized vehicles. UNAMSIL was informed that other vehicles in total disrepair were littering the road between Magburaka and Masingbi and that some armoured personnel carriers, stripped of their weapons, were located in the Kono and Kailahun districts. A few rifles belonging to UNAMSIL have been presented by combatants during the ongoing disarmament exercise.

UNAMSIL is continuing to press RUF to return all the seized weapons and equipment.

13. During several exchanges with UNAMSIL leadership, RUF members continued to express increasing concern about their security and political future. In particular, RUF leadership believed that many Sierra Leonean citizens were keeping arms that could be used against members of RUF. In that regard, they had received a report of harassment of RUF ex-combatants who had returned to their home communities. RUF also expressed apprehension about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court. UNAMSIL is organizing information and sensitization meetings with RUF on the latter issues.

Regional aspects

14. During the period under review, ECOWAS leaders actively pursued their efforts to advance the peace process in Sierra Leone and to address the conflicts affecting the Mano River Union. On 11 April an extraordinary summit meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State was held in Abuja. Apart from its decisions on Sierra Leone, the summit called upon the Security Council to authorize and assist the deployment of the ECOMOG forces along the borders of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. It also set up a mediation committee, comprising the Presidents of Mali, Nigeria and Togo, to encourage dialogue between the Heads of State of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. An ECOWAS mission was sent to Liberia on 18 April to assess Liberia's compliance with the Security Council's demands contained in resolution 1343 (2001) of 7 March. My Special Representative, Oluyemi Adeniji, maintained regular contacts with ECOWAS and with regional leaders to share information and to consult on ways of moving the Sierra Leone peace process forward and to address the conflicts in the Mano River Union.

15. On 18 May a serious incident took place in Rokupr on the first day of the disarmament exercise in the Kambia district when Guinean artillery fired several shells into that area. My Special Representative and President Kabbah travelled to Conakry on 19 May to discuss the incident of 18 May with the Guinean authorities, who apologized for the attack which they attributed to a decision by a local commander. They pledged to cooperate in ensuring that the disarmament exercise in the Kambia district would be successful. At a meeting at the Guinean border town of Pamelap on 3 June, President Kabbah and President Conté agreed to reopen the road linking Freetown and Conakry through the Kambia district.

III. Military and security situation

16. The overall military and security situation in Sierra Leone during March and April remained volatile, with reports of ceasefire violations by CDF, several of which were confirmed by UNAMSIL. The situation improved after the meeting in Abuja on 2 May. My Special Representative, the Force Commander, Lieutenant-General Daniel Opande, and his Deputy Major General Martin Luther Agwai, paid several visits to the areas of clashes between CDF and RUF in the Kono district in an effort to bring the fighting to an end. On some occasions they were accompanied by senior government and CDF officials. As a result of those efforts, dialogue was opened between the CDF units that were apparently advancing on Koidu and RUF elements at that location, which resulted in an agreement by the two sides to begin disarmament in the Kono district. Following that agreement, RUF allowed the CDF combatants to come into Koidu, where they handed over their weapons to UNAMSIL. The combatants were subsequently entered into the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Daru.

17. On 8 June the Sierra Leone police, with the assistance of UNAMSIL, conducted a cordon and search operation in the Juba Hill area of Freetown in response to information that armed elements were planning to cause a disturbance in the city. During this operation, the police found a quantity of weapons and ammunition at the home of a senior officer in the Sierra Leone army, who was arrested with 38 other persons. The investigation into this case is ongoing.

Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

18. Since my last report, the troop strength of UNAMSIL has increased to 12,718 (as at 21 June) with the arrival of a third battalion and support units from Bangladesh, the Ukraine Aviation Unit and the advance party of the Pakistani contingent (see annex). All 4,300

personnel from Pakistan are expected to be in the mission area by September 2001.

19. The build-up of the UNAMSIL military component has enabled the Mission to implement the second phase of its concept of operations and to prepare for the third phase. In keeping with that concept, UNAMSIL deployed in the areas of Lunsar, Makeni, Magburaka and Mano Junction between 7 and 23 April. Since 16 May, two companies from the Bangladeshi contingent have maintained a continuous patrol presence in Koidu, which is a major diamond-producing centre. This presence (which was established much earlier than was originally envisaged) has served as a confidence-building measure and has enabled UNAMSIL to build a more complete picture of the situation in this sensitive area.

20. In addition to these deployments, the robust patrolling that began during the first phase of the concept of operations has continued. Through these long-range patrols, UNAMSIL was able to establish a presence in the Kambia district prior to the commencement of the disarmament exercise in the area. United Nations patrols have also reached Kamakwie in the west, Kabala in the north and Kailahun, Buedu and Koidu in the east.

21. UNAMSIL is preparing to embark on the third phase of its concept of operations, which involves the deployment of United Nations troops into the diamond-producing regions and some border areas in the Eastern Province. With the arrival of the Pakistani contingent, a new sector will be established in the east by September.

22. United Nations military observers deployed to Makeni and Magburaka during the reporting period. They play a key role in the monitoring of the ceasefire and in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Military observers also act as liaison officers to Guinea and to the Sierra Leone army.

23. Looking ahead, UNAMSIL is currently assessing the deployment pattern that the force should adopt and the strength required in the possible fourth phase of the concept of operations. During the fourth phase, UNAMSIL would be expected to expand its presence across the entire country, inter alia, to provide support for elections. UNAMSIL would also build a strong rapid reaction capability. At this stage, however, it is not yet possible to assess whether this will require an increase in the Mission's authorized strength. However, it is expected that there would be progressive involvement of the Sierra Leone army, in close coordination with UNAMSIL, in maintaining security, in particular at the borders. This would also prepare the ground for a gradual handover of security responsibilities to the Sierra Leone police and army in due course, allowing for a phased drawdown of UNAMSIL at a later stage.

24. The army continued its training and restructuring programme, with the assistance of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The programme will soon include ex-combatants who have disarmed in the Kambia and Port Loko districts and have passed the screening test. In order to ensure a measure of impartiality and objectivity, the Government of Sierra Leone has invited UNAMSIL to participate in the screening of ex-combatants who wish to join the army. CDF and RUF will also be represented in the selection committee.

IV. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

Disarmament and demobilization

25. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme was relaunched on 18 May in keeping with the decision taken at the meeting of the joint committee on 15 May. At that meeting, the parties agreed that, in addition to the already existing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps at Port Loko, Bo, Moyamba, Kenema and Daru, additional camps would be set up at Makeni, Lunsar, Kamakwie, Masingbi, Koidu, Pujehun and Bonthe. UNAMSIL would also operate mobile disarmament units. RUF ex-combatants would be encamped for a period of up to four weeks, while CDF combatants would stay in the camps for a shorter period. In the camps, ex-combatants would receive orientation briefings as well as briefings on opportunities available to them during the reintegration stage. The implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme would be monitored by a mechanism with the participation of CDF and RUF. In addition, CDF and RUF would be represented in all the technical bodies of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.

26. During the meeting of the joint committee, held on 15 May, RUF declared that it had a total of 10,000 combatants throughout the country. CDF declared a total of 15,000 combatants, but indicated that that number could increase up to 20,000 because CDF cadres were volunteers rather than enlisted combatants. The two parties also declared the numbers and types of weapons in their possession.

27. In the Kambia and Port Loko districts, a total of 3,502 combatants (1,096 RUF and 2,406 CDF), were disarmed between 18 and 31 May. There were 184 child combatants from RUF and 123 from CDF. Since then disarmament has continued in Lunsar, where 249 RUF and 237 CDF ex-combatants disarmed. The total number of ex-combatants who have disarmed since 18 May stands at 5,669, of which 1,808 are from RUF and 3,861 from CDF. The number of weapons collected during that period is 2,991, with more than 150,000 rounds of assorted ammunition. It is worth noting that the weapons handed in by RUF in the Kambia district were of serviceable quality and included several heavy weapons.

28. During the disarmament exercise in the above-mentioned districts, the accommodation at the Port Loko disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camp proved to be inadequate, resulting in overcrowding and water shortages. To overcome this problem, some CDF combatants had to be demobilized in their villages, while others had to be discharged early from the camp. Before their discharge, the ex-combatants were briefed by Sierra Leone army and police officials on the procedures and criteria for absorption into the army and police.

29. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued to organize support for child ex-combatants, while the World Food Programme (WFP) continued vital food support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration sites. In response to the acceleration of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, UNAMSIL has streamlined its internal organization to better cope with the demands on the Mission in this area. An integrated working group on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, comprising military and civilian components, meets regularly and interfaces with the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. At the same time, there may be a need for UNAMSIL to lend additional support to the Committee and to fill any crucial gaps, within its ability to ensure that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is brought to a successful conclusion.

Reintegration

30. The reintegration aspect of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is pivotal to the success of the entire programme. Without effective and adequate reintegration opportunities, the ex-combatants could resort to banditry or return to the bush. The cash benefits for the combatants have been reduced as a result of the abolition of payment of the transitional safety allowance. In the current exercise, upon demobilization each combatant receives only a small transport allowance, equivalent to about $15. The Government has proposed that, in future, it would provide ex-combatants with food supplies, some materials and cash to assist with shelter, food and health care. In total, this reinsertion package has a value of about $200, most of which would be provided only after ex-combatants register with a regional reintegration centre.

31. The Government has put into place a short-term reintegration programme for ex-combatants of six months' duration, which should start within three months after their demobilization. The opportunities available under this programme include a total of 3,055 available openings in vocational training, agriculture, apprenticeships, public works, child reintegration and dependant support. In preparation for the absorption of ex-combatants into the army, a temporary holding camp to accommodate potential recruits for both the army and the police has been established in Kabala.

32. However, there are still critical gaps in the reintegration programme, including the absence of a bridge between demobilization and reintegration, a shortage of resources for assistance beyond the short-term reintegration period, a lack of coordination with the military reintegration plan and weak linkages with parallel and bilaterally funded programmes in community reintegration. It should also be borne in mind that the short-term reintegration offered through the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme does not guarantee longer-term employment or other income generation, which depends on a revival of the economy. Provision should be made, therefore, for the tracking of ex-combatants to ensure their successful integration into society and to prevent the formation of a disenfranchised group

that, as in the past, could present a threat to the stability of the country and the subregion. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working with the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation to create income-earning opportunities for ex-combatants in the Kambia district as well as to provide support for the tracking of ex-combatants.

33. UNAMSIL has received several indications from both CDF and RUF commanders and ex-combatants that they have no clear understanding regarding reintegration support for ex-combatants. It would be important for the Government, with the assistance of UNAMSIL, to step up sensitization and awareness campaigns for ex-combatants in order to avoid any unrealistic expectations and disappointments that could, as has happened before, lead to disturbances and instability.

34. On 11 and 12 June, the World Bank organized a donors' conference in Paris with the principal aim of generating financial support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme through the World Bank-managed multi-donor trust fund. At that conference, the Government, whose delegation included a high-ranking member of RUF, presented its strategy for the way ahead and, in particular, its plans for the short- and medium-term reintegration of ex-combatants. Currently, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has a funding shortfall of $17.5 million for 2001 and $13.9 million for 2002. It is expected that the Government may run out of resources for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme by August of this year. While no pledges were made at the conference, many delegations responded in a positive manner to reports of progress achieved on the ground and to the plans presented by the Government. I call upon donors to finalize their decision to contribute to this crucial endeavour as soon as possible, since the window of opportunity for a successful implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme remains relatively narrow and the pace of events could very soon outstrip the available resources. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, which is so vital for the success of the overall peace process, cannot be allowed to fail for lack of resources.

35. As part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, UNAMSIL has destroyed a total of 10,800 weapons collected from ex-combatants. Those weapons have been converted into agricultural and other tools. In addition, about 6,960 explosive items collected before 18 May 2001 have been destroyed.

V. Governance and stabilization

36. During the period under review, the Mission continued to enhance and strengthen its civilian presence and operations in order to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the progress achieved on the political and security fronts. To those ends, UNAMSIL has developed collaborative relationships and mechanisms with national and external partners. This coordination has proved especially important as the Mission's deployment has moved ahead and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has gained momentum, which provided opportunities for reintroducing basic services and facilities into areas previously inaccessible both to the Government and the humanitarian community.

Restoration of State authority

37. UNAMSIL continued to work with the Government on efforts to extend civil authority to all areas of the country, giving special attention to the restoration of basic public services in areas where UNAMSIL had recently deployed. United Nations civil affairs officers have thus been assigned to Lunsar, Makeni, Magburaka and Kambia to facilitate the return of government services, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Since my last report, UNAMSIL has provided guidance and logistical support to surveys of government infrastructure and public services in several towns in the Northern Province. The joint participation of RUF and government representatives in those surveys has served to build trust and confidence between the two parties. In all cases, the surveys confirmed that most government infrastructure had been damaged and that most public services were non-existent. Similar surveys will be conducted in the Eastern Province following the further deployment of UNAMSIL.

38. With joint support from UNAMSIL, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP, it is expected that the Government will soon

present to its national and international partners the urgent requirements for humanitarian assistance as well as its priorities for the rehabilitation of its infrastructure. In the meantime, UNAMSIL has encouraged the Government to restart critical social services, especially health and education, in areas where it has recently deployed. Limited progress has been made with the reopening of clinics in Lunsar, the re-establishment of schools in Makeni and the distribution of seeds in the Northern Province, supported by UNICEF, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. At the request of the Ministry of Education, UNAMSIL also facilitated the annual national primary school examination in Makeni, Magburaka, Bumbuna and Kabala, towns from which ministry officials had previously withdrawn. UNAMSIL is also supporting the reform and strengthening of district- and chiefdom-level administration throughout the country.

39. The restoration of a civilian police presence throughout the country is another critical element of governance and stabilization. During the period under review, UNAMSIL activities in this area have focused on assisting the Sierra Leonean police force in training new police recruits, providing advice on investigation methods, supporting the deployment of officers throughout the country and overseeing the construction or rehabilitation of police stations. United Nations civilian police advisers have been deployed to Makeni and Lunsar to assist in the planned deployment of the Sierra Leone police to the area. The advisers are collaborating with the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force on training activities. In the near future, I intend to review the role of United Nations civilian police advisers in the current environment in Sierra Leone and make recommendations to the Security Council in due course.

40. The Sierra Leone police have successfully deployed to Kambia. Plans are currently under way to deploy the police officers in Lunsar, Makeni and Magburaka. It should be noted that RUF is not placing any obstacles in the way of the deployment of the police and of health and education officials in the areas where it is present.

41. In spite of recent encouraging progress, the restoration of State authority still faces major challenges. Because of severe budgetary constraints, the Government has very limited capacity to respond to the massive needs for rehabilitation and basic services. Security concerns are still paramount in large parts of the country, and this has sometimes discouraged government officers from returning to their posts. Finally, a certain degree of inertia has led to delays in the extension of government services, including in areas already controlled by the Government. A key challenge that may soon present itself may be the extension of State authority and the maintenance of law and order in the diamond-producing areas. Sierra Leone will need sustained support and encouragement from the international community to successfully address these structural and capacity constraints.

Rehabilitation

42. For the rehabilitation of communities adversely affected by the war, the United Nations Trust Fund for Sierra Leone has provided direct support to UNAMSIL peace-building activities throughout the country. To date, the Trust Fund has provided assistance — often involving UNAMSIL force contingents — in rebuilding police stations, which are vital in maintaining fragile security, repairing social infrastructure such as schools, supporting victims of sexual violence and carrying out peace sensitization activities and human rights campaigns. As the peace process progresses with the deployment of UNAMSIL contingents, the Trust Fund is being redefined to focus on two windows of support to stabilization: (a) quick-impact programmes to support the restoration of government authority; and (b) first-line short-term support to the war-affected populations in areas of deployment. Contributions made so far to the Trust Fund are almost exhausted, and new resources will be required to support the renewed phase of the peace process. In addition to the Trust Fund, UNAMSIL negotiated an agreement with the Ministry of Health to have UNAMSIL force contingents distribute critical medicines to local populations that are not currently serviced by the Government.

VI. Elections

43. With the current progress in disarmament, it appears increasingly likely that the Government will be able to organize elections during the next dry season (October 2001 to May 2002). Presently, it envisages doing so in December of this year. Based on this target

date, the National Electoral Commission has completed its pre-electoral preparations, including drawing up a strategic plan, the timetable and the election budget. The Commission is receiving most of its technical assistance from the Commonwealth and the International Foundation for Election Systems. The Commission has consulted governmental, traditional, political and civic organizations on the choice of the electoral system to be adopted in the upcoming elections. A great majority of the Sierra Leonean public appears to support a single-member constituency system, which would have major technical, financial and operational consequences that would also affect the time needed for the preparation of the elections.

44. It is envisaged that the next phase of electoral preparations would include a three-month intensive civic education campaign designed to inform, educate and raise the awareness of the electorate, which will commence in July. This would be immediately followed by a nationwide registration of the country's estimated 2.7 million potential voters. The registration process will involve the registration of eligible Sierra Leoneans, the exhibition of the provisional voters' register, the hearing of claims and objections arising from the exhibition and the printing of the final voters' register. The following crucial phase, leading up to the holding of elections, would include the nomination of candidates, the political campaign and the preparation of electoral materials. This phase will require increased assistance by UNAMSIL.

45. To prepare for the involvement of the United Nations in the elections, the Secretariat sent an assessment mission to Sierra Leone in May 2001 to review with the National Electoral Commission, UNAMSIL and other partners the nature and timing of the support that may be required from the United Nations. To date, UNAMSIL has provided assistance for the coordination of international support to the elections. UNDP has already initiated action to mobilize funding and logistical support from external partners. Bilateral donors have already pledged a significant amount of the needed financial resources.

46. On 10 June, the National Electoral Commission, in a letter addressed to my Special Representative, requested United Nations technical and logistical assistance in support of the elections. Such assistance would include the provision of a team to observe the electoral process, transport and communication assets and security throughout the process. In accordance with the mandate of UNAMSIL under resolution 1270 (1999) of 22 October 1999, I intend to respond positively to this request.

47. In addition to the areas of support indicated in the previous paragraph, it is my expectation that the Mission's public information capabilities could also play a significant role in support of the electoral process. Any support provided by UNAMSIL in the elections would obviously require additional resources, including the gradual increase of its electoral capacity in accordance with the phases described above. In this regard, I intend to make more specific recommendations to the Security Council as soon as possible on the basis of a well-prepared electoral plan. At present, it would be my intention to establish a small electoral unit in UNAMSIL that would be expanded gradually in accordance with the progress made in the electoral preparations.

48. In principle, the monitoring of the process should begin as soon as electoral preparations begin throughout the country and should involve a broad range of actors and international organizations, including the Organization of African Unity and ECOWAS.

49. Obviously, several key conditions need to be met before elections can be held effectively and in an atmosphere that is free of violence and intimidation: the full disarmament of RUF and CDF, the deployment of UNAMSIL and, in some areas, of the Sierra Leone army, to provide security throughout the country; the accessibility of most if not all parts of the country for voter registration and civic education; and the adoption of measures to receive internally displaced persons and Sierra Leonean refugees. In addition, members of RUF who have disarmed and demobilized should be allowed to participate in the political life of the country. Therefore, I encourage the Government to provide further assistance to facilitate the transformation of RUF to a political party.

VII. Public information

50. UNAMSIL continued to enhance its capacity to disseminate information designed to promote the peace process and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and to improve public understanding of UNAMSIL and the United Nations. UNAMSIL conducted sensitization meetings with the

local communities, including youth groups, women's organizations, ex-combatants and journalists, and is utilizing local comedians, artists and television for public outreach campaigns. It has organized two successful public events: a nationwide Women's March for Peace and the first musical concert in more than a decade in Makeni, featuring one of Sierra Leone's most popular pop stars. The concert was attended by several high-level government officials. A nationwide tour of a stage play on reconciliation has started recently.

51. Radio UNAMSIL has expanded its reach in the country and the subregion by broadcasting on short-wave as well as FM frequencies. Efforts are under way to set up transmitters in Magburaka and Bo that would extend the reach of Radio UNAMSIL to most of the country. A training course for local journalists will be held in late June.

VIII. Human rights

52. In spite of recent progress, the situation of internally displaced persons and returnees in Sierra Leone continues to be a major cause of concern. Reports from internally displaced persons and returnees indicate that, until recently, armed groups have committed serious breaches of international humanitarian law against the civilian population in Sierra Leone, including rape and the destruction of homes. These allegedly occurred while Guinean forces were in pursuit of RUF combatants who had carried out operations in Guinea. UNAMSIL and human rights non-governmental organizations have been able to document some violations committed in the Kambia district. There have also been reports of villages being attacked from the air, causing large-scale civilian casualties.

53. However, the recent deployment of UNAMSIL troops in Makeni and Magburaka, as well as the disarmament in the Kambia and Port Loko districts, has enabled some internally displaced persons to return to their homes. Human rights officers have begun to undertake visits to Lunsar and Magburaka. UNAMSIL plans to carry out regular human rights monitoring visits to all areas in which it is deployed. On 2 May UNAMSIL opened a human rights office in Kenema. It plans to open additional offices in other regions as well.

54. A group of 23 Guinean refugees was repatriated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 12 May after escaping from RUF custody in Kailahun. An additional 24 Guineans were released in early June, while many others are alleged to be held by RUF in or near Kailahun. They are said to have been captured during RUF raids into Guinea. Interviews with those who were released indicate that many of them suffered human rights abuses, including rape. UNAMSIL and UNHCR are collaborating in efforts to locate them and secure their release.

55. About 265 suspected detainees, including 10 women, have been held in custody by the Government without being charged or having access to legal counsel since May 2000. Since September, UNAMSIL has been granted permission to pay visits to the Freetown Central Prison on the condition that all discussions with detainees are held in the presence of prison officials. However, since 14 March, when some detainees rioted at the prison, access has been curtailed. Some detainees have been moved to safer, undisclosed locations. Following pressure by UNAMSIL, the Government allowed visits to resume on 7 June.

Protection of children

56. During the reporting period, close to 1,000 abducted and separated children have been released. A large majority (over 870) of them were released by RUF. The released children are now in the care of child-protection agencies. RUF has established a regional committee on the release of child combatants that liaises directly with UNAMSIL and the child-protection agencies in the area. Family reunification has been relatively successful. UNAMSIL, through its public information facilities and initiatives in civil affairs, is ensuring that information and messages about the reunification and reintegration of children reach all sectors of the community.

IX. Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court

57. Some progress is being achieved with regard to the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. My Special Representative and the

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have agreed on a detailed programme of support for the Commission's preparatory phase. The raising of the necessary funds for the Commission is now a priority, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has agreed to coordinate this effort.

58. My Special Representative, as selection coordinator, has received 59 nominations for the 4 positions of national commissioners for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. At the international level, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has also made progress in identifying suitable candidates. Within Sierra Leone, the nomination process, which has been given widespread publicity, has itself assisted in increasing public awareness about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Considerable effort is being made to ensure Sierra Leonean ownership of the process and to include traditional structures and methods of reconciliation. There is a high degree of support for the Commission among Sierra Leoneans who are aware of the institution and its role. The preparations for the Commission must be expedited to the maximum extent possible.

59. UNAMSIL also works with the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney-General's Office on the restoration of local courts in the Northern Province and also sensitizes members of RUF and CDF, ex-combatants and local populations about the goals and procedures of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In addition, UNAMSIL organizes face-to-face reconciliation dialogues between RUF representatives and the paramount chiefs and encourages public works programmes to enable ex-combatants to work with local populations in rebuilding their shared communities.

60. The Secretariat has continued its discussions with interested Member States with regard to the financing of the Special Court. It is currently estimated that the Special Court would require about $57 million in voluntary funding for the first three years. To date, donors have pledged about $34 million. In this regard, I appeal to donors to make additional contributions so that the Special Court can be established.

X. Humanitarian aspects

61. A key feature of the period under review has been improved access across the country. The deployment of UNAMSIL peacekeepers to Lunsar, Makeni and Kambia and patrols in the Kono area, together with the progress in disarmament, have opened up new areas of the country to humanitarian interventions. Humanitarian agencies and organizations are now operational in all of these areas, and an expansion of activities is planned. Refugees continue to return to Sierra Leone over land and sea, many of whom have returned to RUF-controlled areas. The situation with regard to refugees and internally displaced persons is described in more detail in my report of 23 May 2001 (S/2001/513).

62. The deployment of Sierra Leone army to the border with Guinea in the Kambia district has improved the security situation there and could assist in creating conditions for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. However, much needs to be done before the former inhabitants of that district can return. Most of the infrastructure and basic services in the district are missing or have been destroyed. Also, the Governments of Guinea and Sierra Leone have yet to establish immigration and customs services at the border crossings. Meanwhile, UNHCR has established a presence in Kambia.

63. The longer-term reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration will require considerable support. I call upon donor countries to adopt a flexible approach and to sustain their support to Sierra Leone as the security environment improves and the need for longer-term community recovery increases by contributing to the ongoing consolidated appeals process and by further supporting development agencies.

64. With the rapid developments taking place in Sierra Leone and in neighbouring countries, effective coordination is of high importance. Within the Government, the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation is a key policy forum for the rehabilitation of the country. Within the United Nations family, the new institutional arrangements whereby my Deputy Special Representative for Governance and Stabilization also serves as Humanitarian Coordinator have significantly contributed to stronger links between UNAMSIL, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations providing humanitarian assistance.

XI. Economic developments

65. Recent progress in the peace process and the improvement of the security situation have helped to improve the economic situation in the country. Inflation has remained under control, and the trade balance and foreign exchange reserves have strengthened. The ready availability of foreign exchange resulted in the appreciation of the local currency against the United States dollar. The recovery was facilitated by prudent macroeconomic policies that the Government continued to implement.

66. Notwithstanding these positive developments, the country's overall economic and financial situation remains very difficult. It has been crippled by 10 years of civil conflict, and poverty remains endemic and pervasive. Export growth has not kept pace with imports. Agricultural output continued its upward, albeit slow trend, but major producing areas remained inaccessible. Rutile and bauxite mines, which represent a significant source of income, are still non-operational. Meanwhile, importation has sharply increased, with the resumption of rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. The country's internal and especially external debt remains a very onerous burden on its economy. The debt service to export ratio is estimated at 55 per cent for the year 2000. It is hoped that Sierra Leone will be able to access debt relief under the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries initiative.

67. In response to these challenges, the Government has developed, with the Bretton Woods institutions, a two-phase approach to its poverty-reduction strategy. During a transitional period from 2001 to 2002, efforts will be focused on strengthening the peace process, meeting the immediate needs of the displaced population and ex-combatants, rehabilitating the economic and social infrastructures and building capacity in the public services. A longer-term strategy of reform will build on ongoing structural reforms, including the strengthening of the banking system, the promotion of the private sector and the reform of the public enterprise sector.

XII. Consultations with troop-contributing countries

68. During the period under review, the Secretariat continued its bilateral discussions and consultations with troop contributors on a range of operational and administrative issues. In particular, it held several consultations with contributors whose troops are experiencing serious shortfalls in equipment and self-sustainment capabilities. As a result of those discussions, the Secretariat and the Member States involved are exploring alternatives to the current support arrangements for affected contingents. The Secretariat has also continued its discussions with prospective troop contributors that could contribute additional personnel to UNAMSIL in case the Security Council decides to further increase its authorized military strength.

69. On 22 May troop and police contributors received a briefing from the Secretariat on developments in Sierra Leone. On that occasion, troop contributors welcomed the positive developments in the peace process, underscored the need to address the tension between the Mano River Union countries and expressed their support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme as well as for the activities of the UNAMSIL civilian police.

XIII. Observations

70. The positive developments in Sierra Leone over the past two months constitute grounds for cautious optimism that Sierra Leone, with the assistance of the international community, is turning a page and is now embarking on a course that could lead to long-awaited peace. I call upon the leadership of RUF, as well as the Government of Sierra Leone, to continue to work resolutely and in good faith towards that end.

71. Despite this positive outlook, however, many challenges remain, and considerable efforts need to be made to maintain the recently achieved momentum. In particular, the United Nations must remain vigilant and continue its efforts to establish security throughout the country. In that regard, UNAMSIL will continue its forward deployment, in particular to the key diamond-producing areas in the east of the country, as well as its robust patrols to all areas, including towards the borders with Guinea and Liberia.

72. While the progress achieved in Sierra Leone is encouraging, the security situation in the subregion remains difficult. I reiterate my call upon the leaders of the Mano River Union countries to start, without delay, a political dialogue that would have as its principal objective the restoration of security and stability in the subregion. This would also allow the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people and refugees to return to their places of origin and resume their lives in peace.

73. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme remains crucial to all aspects of the Sierra Leonean peace process, including the creation of conditions conducive to the holding of free and fair elections throughout the country. Therefore, in the coming months, the Government and its international partners should concentrate their efforts on the effective implementation of that programme. UNAMSIL stands ready, within its capabilities, to provide assistance to the Government in order to expedite and maintain the momentum of the programme.

74. There is a serious risk that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme will soon stall as a result of insufficient funding. I therefore call upon the international community to contribute urgently and generously to the trust fund for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme managed by the World Bank. However, should voluntary funding not be forthcoming in time or in sufficient amounts, it would then be necessary to consider, on an urgent basis, alternative funding mechanisms to enable the programme to continue.

75. The most urgent tasks that need to be addressed in the short term include the early establishment of adequate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration facilities and the development of a realistic timetable for implementing the programme in the remaining districts and for the timely creation of reintegration opportunities. The reinsertion of ex-combatants into their communities will require particular and sustained attention in the broader context of the reintegration of war-affected populations and the overall economic recovery of the country. The social reintegration of senior and mid-level RUF commanders may require flexible solutions, for example through dedicated educational programmes in Sierra Leone or aboard.

76. As more communities in Sierra Leone start receiving demobilized ex-combatants, there will be a need to exercise tolerance and forgiveness to start the process of reconciliation and national healing. This should be a country-wide process, which will require the encouragement and support of the international community. For their part, many Sierra Leoneans wish to see the restoration, as early as possible, of normalcy and peace to their communities through national reconciliation. In that regard, I believe that the efforts by the United Nations and the Sierra Leonean Government to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should be accelerated. I am also pleased to note that some progress has been made in the preparations for the Special Court.

77. The forward deployment of UNAMSIL and the progress made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme are expected to open up large parts of the country. It is important for the Government to seize this opportunity and extend State administration and basic services throughout Sierra Leone in an effective and transparent manner. The Government should also expedite, along with its national and international partners, planning for long-term recovery and rehabilitation.

78. In the months ahead, once UNAMSIL has deployed further, the establishment of State authority and law and order in the diamond-producing areas will be a particular challenge. I urge the Government to give this issue its full attention in order to avoid the serious consequences that could result from a possible surge in uncontrolled diamond mining.

79. UNAMSIL, in particular its civilian police component, could play an enhanced role in providing training and advice to Sierra Leonean law enforcement officials, in cooperation with the team of Commonwealth police advisers. To that end, I intend to bring the civilian police component of UNAMSIL to its authorized strength of 60 civilian police advisers as soon as possible and to assess whether there is a need to further expand the United Nations role in that regard.

80. If the pace of implementation of the Abuja Agreement is maintained, it is likely that the dialogue between the Government of Sierra Leone and RUF will increasingly focus on political issues. The United Nations, in coordination with ECOWAS, stands ready to help the parties in that process. The Government has

already extended some assistance to RUF to help transform it into a political party so that it can participate in the next elections. For its part, RUF should expedite this transformation through full disarmament and active participation in national and local mechanisms for reconciliation, as well as by taking urgent steps to complete the administrative procedure to establish itself as a political party. In that regard, there may be a need for international assistance for all registered parties in Sierra Leone in order to create an environment conducive to free and fair elections.

81. The Government has requested, through the National Electoral Commission, the support of the United Nations in the electoral process. Preparations are under way, in accordance with the UNAMSIL mandate, to provide such support, as described in section VI above.

82. In the light of the progress achieved on the ground, I am assessing what deployment pattern UNAMSIL should adopt and the overall military strength that may be required in the next phases, which will involve deployment throughout the country and, subsequently, support for the holding of free and fair elections. As indicated in previous reports, this may require a further temporary increase of the Mission's military strength. I intend to make detailed recommendations regarding its strength and tasks in support of the peace process and the elections, based on a realistic electoral plan, in my next report.

83. I am very conscious that support for the peace process in Sierra Leone places a heavy financial burden on the international community. In addition to financing UNAMSIL through assessed contributions, Governments are also asked to make voluntary contributions for a whole range of activities, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Special Court, the preparation and organization of elections and humanitarian assistance, as well as the long-term development and economic recovery of the country. I hope, therefore, that the Sierra Leonean people will make the best possible use of the current unique opportunity created by the international community's significant investments.

84. In conclusion, I should like to commend the parties, ECOWAS, my Special Representative, Mr. Adeniji, and the UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel of UNAMSIL for the progress accomplished during the period under review. I would also like to express my appreciation to the countries contributing troops to this very important mission.

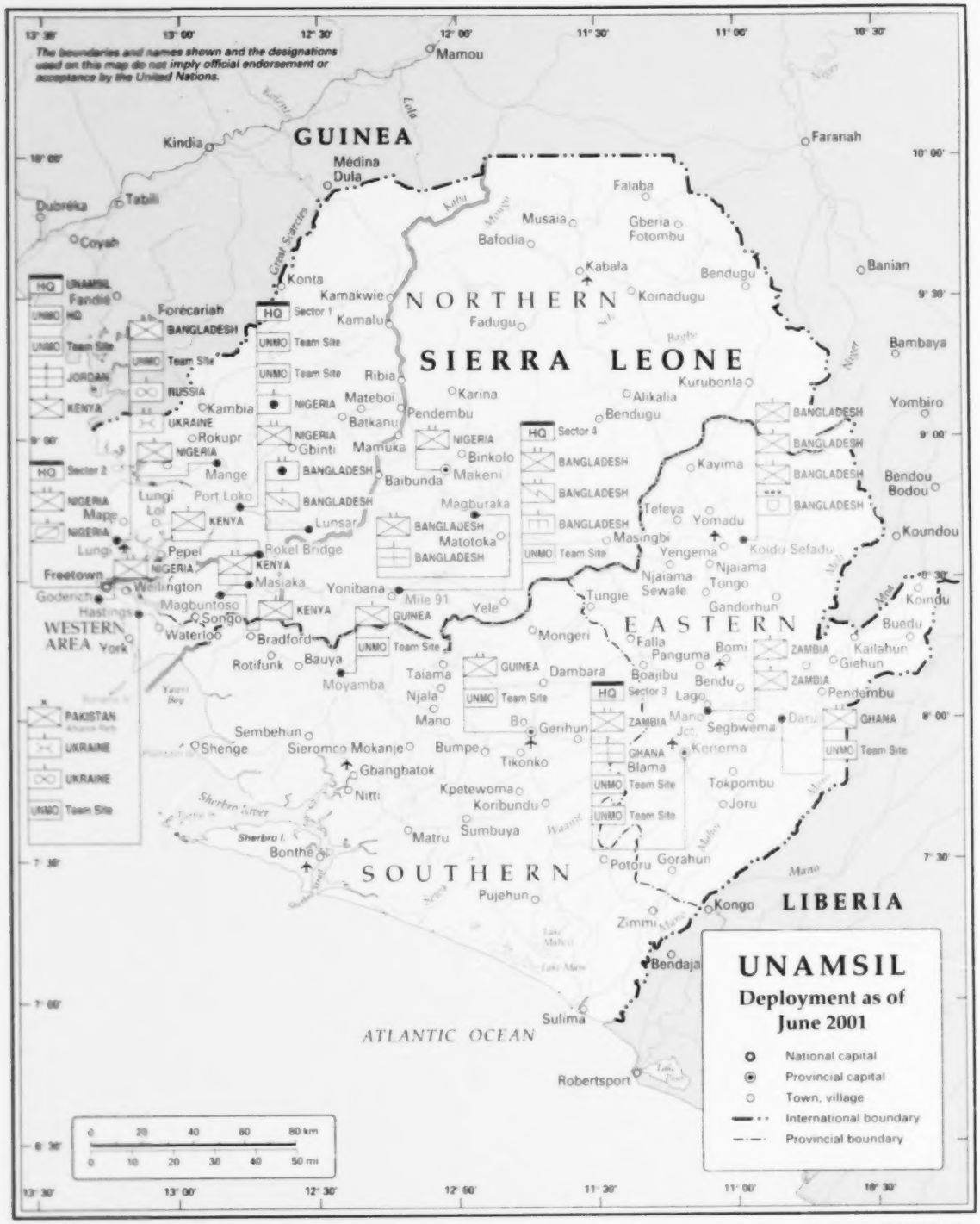
Annex

United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 21 June 2001

Contributor	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Sector headquarters staff*	*Total*
Bangladesh	12	18	4 183	65	4 278
Bolivia	6				6
Canada	5				5
China	6				6
Croatia	10				10
Czech Republic	5				5
Denmark	2				2
Egypt	10				10
France	1				1
Gambia	26				26
Ghana	4	11	796	58	869
Guinea	12	5	772		789
Indonesia	10				10
Jordan	10	2	118		130
Kenya	11	17	992	64	1 084
Kyrgyzstan	2				2
Malaysia	10				10
Mali	8				8
Nepal	6				6
New Zealand	2				2
Nigeria	4	24	3 232	4	3 264
Pakistan	10	13	515		538
Russian Federation	16	4	109		129
Slovakia	2				2
Sweden	3				3
United Republic of Tanzania	11				11
Thailand	5				5
Ukraine		5	628		633
United Kingdom	16	8			24
Uruguay	11				11
Zambia	10	6	818	5	839
Total	**246**	**113**	**12 163**	**196**	**12 718**

Authorized strength: Military 17,500 (up to 260 military observers); civilian police 60.

Civilian police component: Bangladesh 4; Gambia 2; Ghana 3; India 1; Jordan 3; Kenya 3; Malaysia 3; Nepal 5; Norway 2; Senegal 5; Zimbabwe 2. Total: 33.



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